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6 **IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
7 **FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

8 JOSE LICEA and SONYA
VALENZUELA, individually and on
9 behalf of all others similarly situated,

10 Plaintiffs,

11 v.

12 CINMAR, LLC, a Delaware limited
liability company; and DOES 1 through
13 25, inclusive,

14 Defendants.
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Case No. 2:22-cv-06454-MWF-JEM

**BRIEF OF *AMICUS CURIAE* THE
NATIONAL RETAIL
FEDERATION IN SUPPORT OF
DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO
DISMISS**

Hearing Date: January 30, 2023

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1 **CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

2 *Amicus Curiae*, the National Retail Federation, is not a publicly held
3 corporation, has no parent corporation, and no publicly held corporation owns 10%
4 or more of its stock. No counsel to any party in this case authored this brief in whole
5 or in part; no party or party’s counsel contributed any money that was intended to
6 fund preparing or submitting the brief; and no person—other than the *amicus curiae*,
7 its members, and its counsel—contributed money that was intended to fund
8 preparing or submitting the brief.

9 **INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE**

10 Established in 1911, the National Retail Federation (“NRF”) is the world’s
11 largest retail trade association. Retail is the largest private-sector employer in the
12 United States. It supports one in four U.S. jobs—approximately 52 million American
13 workers—and contributes \$3.9 trillion to annual GDP. The NRF’s membership
14 includes retailers of all sizes, formats, and channels of distribution, including many
15 that sell goods via a website and communicate with customers through a website.
16 NRF’s members also are often targeted as defendants in class actions. NRF is thus
17 familiar with class action litigation, both from the perspective of individual
18 defendants in class actions and from a more global perspective. And many of NRF’s
19 members sell goods via the internet to consumers in California.

20 NRF files this brief to provide the Court with its perspective regarding the
21 claims in this case, which, as Defendant has pointed out, is part of a wave of copy-
22 paste lawsuits filed by Plaintiffs’ attorneys against dozens of retailers, including
23 NRF members. *See* Def.’s Mem., Dkt. #26, at 2; *see also* Def.’s Req. for Judicial
24 Notice, Dkt. #27. Like Defendant, many retailers operate a website with a “chat”
25 feature supplied by a third-party software service provider. Much like an email
26 account, the chat feature allows retail customers to send written communications to
27 a retailer to ask questions or seek advice regarding products or services. Plaintiffs

1 allege that by reading written messages Plaintiffs sent to a retailer via the chat
2 feature, and by storing those messages rather than immediately deleting them, the
3 retailer has committed illegal wiretapping and eavesdropping in violation of the
4 California Invasion of Privacy Act (“CIPA”). These claims are without any merit
5 and, lest they become an abusive tool wielded against retailers across the country,
6 they should be dismissed with prejudice.

7 NRF members respect and protect the privacy of all their customers and
8 website visitors. Vexatious lawsuits like this one do nothing to advance those
9 privacy interests. Instead, they attempt to warp CIPA beyond recognition and do so
10 in a way that threatens numerous businesses with civil and criminal liability simply
11 for using commonplace technology to communicate and serve customers in
12 California. This Court has “broad discretion” to accept briefs of *amicus curiae* and,
13 in general, “err[s] on the side of permitting such briefs.” *WildEarth Guardians v.*
14 *Haaland*, 561 F. Supp. 3d 890, 905-06 (C.D. Cal. 2021) (internal marks omitted).
15 Because this brief provides arguments that will be “useful” to the Court from
16 *amicus*’s “unique . . . perspective,” *id.* (internal marks omitted), NRF files this
17 *amicus curiae* brief in support of Defendant’s motion to dismiss.

18 ARGUMENT

19 **I. Plaintiffs have failed to allege sufficient injury in fact.**

20 Plaintiffs’ barebone allegations fail to allege any injury sufficient to show
21 standing. The Constitution’s Article III requirements of a case or controversy arising
22 out of “concrete and particularized” injury are meant to prevent courts from being
23 embroiled in claims like Plaintiffs’, which allege only non-specific hypothetical
24 harms that can be duplicated in cookie-cutter lawsuits filed in courts across the State.
25 *Lujan v. Defs. of Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 560-61 (1992); *see also* Def.’s Mem., Dkt.
26 #26, at 4-5. NRF has a strong interest in ensuring its members are not subject to such
27 lawsuits that fail to meet the constitutional minimum of standing. And even if not

1 raised by the parties, because “standing is perhaps the most important of the
2 jurisdictional doctrines,” this Court is “under an independent obligation to examine”
3 a plaintiff’s standing. *FW/PBS, Inc. v. City of Dallas*, 493 U.S. 215, 231 (1990)
4 (internal marks and citation omitted).

5 Plaintiffs allege only that they “visited Defendant’s website,” Am. Compl.,
6 Dkt. #19, at ¶ 17, but that is insufficient to show injury under Article III. Plaintiffs
7 make no allegations as to any information exchanged through the website chat,
8 whether, how, and why that information was sensitive, or why Plaintiffs were injured
9 by sending that information to the Defendant. *See Rahman v. Marriott Int’l, Inc.*,
10 No. SA CV 20-00654-DOC-KES, 2021 WL 346421, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 12, 2021)
11 (“information obtained lack[ed] the degree of sensitivity required by the Ninth
12 Circuit to establish injury in fact”); *United States v. Heckenkamp*, 482 F.3d 1142,
13 1146 (9th Cir. 2007) (“A person’s reasonable expectation of privacy may be
14 diminished in transmissions over the Internet or e-mail that have already arrived at
15 the recipient.” (internal marks omitted)).

16 Even assuming Plaintiffs had alleged they used Defendant’s website chat
17 feature to send private information to Defendant, any alleged harm stems from
18 Plaintiffs’ purported lack of knowledge that chat messages were being read and
19 stored, rather than immediately deleted. Am. Compl., Dkt. #19, at ¶¶ 8, 18-19. But
20 websites have a Privacy Policy that discloses how it uses the data customers send to
21 it. So Plaintiffs either read the disclosures and thus suffered no injury under the
22 statute or Article III, or Plaintiffs deliberately *avoided* Defendant’s clearly disclosed
23 Privacy Policy, in which case the alleged privacy harms were self-inflicted. *See Red*
24 *v. Gen. Mills, Inc.*, No. 2:15-CV-02232-ODW(JPR), 2015 WL 9484398, at *5 (C.D.
25 Cal. Dec. 29, 2015) (holding that plaintiff’s “self-inflicted injury . . . does not confer
26 standing” when alleged harm stemmed from food ingredient she knew to be
27 unhealthy, since she “knew that she could (or should be able to) look at the
28

1 ingredients” label and it was not “unreasonable to expect her to read the label before
2 purchasing the food”); *see also Mendia v. Garcia*, 768 F.3d 1009, 1013 n.1 (9th Cir.
3 2014) (self-inflicted injury cannot confer standing); *Makaryan v. Volkswagen Grp.*
4 *of Am., Inc.*, No. CV 17-5086 PA (KSX), 2017 WL 6888254, at *7 (C.D. Cal. Oct.
5 13, 2017).

6 Plaintiffs’ alleged self-inflicted harms also fail to confer standing under their
7 “tester” theory. Plaintiffs claim to be “testers” visiting Defendant’s website in order
8 to determine whether they can have their own privacy violated. Am. Compl., Dkt.
9 #19, at ¶¶ 16. But while courts have sometimes allowed standing for testers in narrow
10 contexts like housing discrimination, plaintiffs generally do not have standing when
11 the alleged injury is self-inflicted. *See Mendia*, 768 F.3d at 1013 n.1; *see also Laufer*
12 *v. Looper*, 22 F.4th 871, 879 (10th Cir. 2022) (“[S]tatus as a tester alone is
13 insufficient to confer standing.”). Plaintiffs cannot seek out harm and then sue over
14 any alleged resulting injury. *See, e.g., Ctr. for Biological Diversity v. U.S. Env’t*
15 *Prot. Agency*, 937 F.3d 533, 540-41 (5th Cir. 2019) (collecting cases showing that a
16 plaintiff cannot “go[] looking for” an injury and thereby “manufacture standing”);
17 *Nat’l Fam. Plan. & Reprod. Health Ass’n, Inc. v. Gonzales*, 468 F.3d 826, 831 (D.C.
18 Cir. 2006) (holding plaintiff lacked standing because the “asserted injury appears to
19 be largely of its own making” and the court has “consistently held that self-inflicted
20 harm doesn’t satisfy the basic requirements for standing”).

21 For these reasons, Plaintiffs fail to allege sufficient injury to have standing
22 and their Complaint must be dismissed.

23 **II. Plaintiffs fail to state a claim that the alleged CIPA violations are within**
24 **the statute of limitations.**

25 Claims brought under the CIPA are subject to a one-year statute of limitations.
26 *See Cal. Civ. Proc. § 340(a), Montalti v. Catanzariti*, 236 Cal. Rptr. 231, 232 (Cal.
27 Ct. App. 1987); *NEI Contracting & Eng’g, Inc. v. Hanson Aggregates Pac. Sw., Inc.*,

No. 3:12-cv-01685-BAS(JLB), 2015 WL 1346110, at *4 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 24, 2015). Plaintiffs fail to sufficiently allege an injury incurred within the statute of limitations. *See* Def.’s Mem., Dkt. #26, at 3. Plaintiffs merely state that they visited Defendant’s website “[w]ithin the last year”—not even that they used the chat function—and provide no further factual allegations. Am. Compl., Dkt. #19, at ¶ 17. But Plaintiffs’ bare assertions that their claims are within the limitations period are nothing “more than labels and conclusions, and a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action,” which “will not do.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). And “[c]ourts often dismiss claims under Rule 8 when plaintiffs fail to allege approximately when the actionable misconduct occurred.” *Brodsky v. Apple Inc.*, 445 F. Supp. 3d 110, 135 (N.D. Cal. 2020) (collecting cases); *see also O’Donnell v. U.S. Bancorp Equip. Fin., Inc.*, No. C10-0941 TEH, 2010 WL 2198203, at *3 (N.D. Cal. May 28, 2010) (dismissing case because plaintiff “ha[d] not alleged any dates in her complaint”).

Plaintiffs, for example, have failed to provide the date on which the chat feature was allegedly used by Plaintiffs, which would go towards establishing whether or not the alleged activity occurred within the statute of limitations. Without even this basic factual pleading, the Complaint must be dismissed. To do otherwise would subject retailers across the country to suits that provide courts and litigants alike with no notice of when the alleged legal violation occurred and no factual basis to determine whether the claim was within the limitations period—or even to know what substantive law applies given that statutes are frequently amended.

1 **III. Website chat features do not violate § 631(a)'s prohibition on**
2 **wiretapping or eavesdropping.**

3 Plaintiffs' complaint must also be dismissed because Plaintiffs have "fail[ed]"
4 to state a claim upon which relief can be granted." Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6). "To
5 survive a motion to dismiss, a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter,
6 accepted as true, to 'state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.'" *Ashcroft v.*
7 *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570). And the court
8 is "not required to accept as true conclusory allegations which are contradicted by
9 documents referred to in the complaint," such as Defendant's website and Privacy
10 Policy. *Martinez v. Newsom*, 46 F.4th 965, 971 (9th Cir. 2022) (internal marks
11 omitted). Here, Plaintiffs make conclusory allegations that Defendant directly
12 violated CIPA § 631 and that Defendant aided and abetted a third party's violation
13 of § 631. But, as shown below, Plaintiff fails to show almost any element of a § 631
14 violation is met by everyday internet chats.
15

16 **A. Plaintiffs have failed to show web chats violate § 631 because**
17 **participants to a conversation do not violate that statute by reading**
18 **communications sent to them.**

19 Plaintiffs allege that Defendant "secretly wiretaps" conversations with
20 customers by reading messages that customers send *to Defendant* using the chat
21 feature on Defendant's own website. Am. Compl., Dkt. #19, at 1. Although § 631(a)
22 prohibits secretly wiretapping or eavesdropping on a conversation, it cannot be
23 applied to a participant to the conversation because "[i]t is never a secret to one party
24 to a conversation that the other party is listening to the conversation; only a third
25 party can listen secretly to a private conversation." *Rogers v. Ulrich*, 125 Cal. Rptr.
26 306, 309 (Cal. Ct. App. 1975); *see also Saleh v. Nike, Inc.*, 562 F. Supp. 3d 503, 519
27

1 (C.D. Cal. 2021) (“[T]o the extent Plaintiff alleges [online retailer] recorded its own
2 communications with Plaintiff, the court finds the § 631 [participant] exemption
3 applies.”); *Powell v. Union Pac. R.R. Co.*, 864 F. Supp. 2d 949, 955 (E.D. Cal. 2012)
4 (collecting cases that “are in accord that section 631 applies only to third parties and
5 not participants”).
6

7 As Defendant explains, the sender of a communication necessarily consents
8 to the intended recipient receiving the communication. Def.’s Mem., Dkt. #26, at
9 16-18. Plaintiffs cannot state an “eavesdropping” or “wiretapping” claim under
10 § 631 against Defendant for merely participating in a text-based conversation with
11 Plaintiffs. Nor can Defendant be held liable under § 631 for retaining the written
12 conversation to which Defendant was a participant. *See Warden v. Kahn*, 160 Cal.
13 Rptr. 471, 475 (Cal. Ct. App. 1979). Thus, Plaintiffs’ claim that Defendant is directly
14 liable for violating § 631 must be dismissed.
15

16 **B. Plaintiffs do not allege facts establishing that web chat features**
17 **“tap” a “telegraph or telephone wire.”**

18 Plaintiffs also fail to allege facts to show that the chat feature violates the first
19 clause of § 631(a), which prohibits only “taps” of “telegraph or telephone” wires.
20 Text-based communications over the internet between two computers have been
21 held *not* to take place by “telegraph or telephone” via “wire, line, cable, or
22 instrument” for purposes of § 631(a). *Mastel v. Miniclip SA*, 549 F. Supp. 3d 1129,
23 1134-35 (E.D. Cal. 2021). This is true even if Plaintiffs used a web browser from a
24 smartphone to use the chat feature on Defendant’s website, because while
25 smartphones “contain the word ‘phone’ in their name, and have the capability of
26 performing telephonic functions, they are, in reality, small computers . . . that
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1 perform functions well beyond and unrelated to those of a telephone,” and Plaintiffs’
2 allegations necessarily involve “a feature of the portion of the [smartphone] that
3 functions as a computer, not the phone.” *Id.* at 1135-36. For these reasons, the
4 website’s chat feature cannot be held to have violated § 631(a)’s wiretapping
5 prohibition, and Defendant cannot be held liable directly or for aiding and abetting.
6

7 **C. Plaintiffs fail to allege facts that chat communications were**
8 **“intercepted” “while the same is in transit or passing over any**
9 **wire.”**

10 Even if the second clause of § 631(a), unlike the first clause, applies beyond
11 telephones and telegraphs, Plaintiffs fail to state a claim under the second clause
12 because Plaintiffs fail to sufficiently state facts establishing the alleged
13 eavesdropping occurred while the chat communication was “in transit.” Def.’s
14 Mem., Dkt. #26, at 10-12. Failure to allege facts showing that the interception
15 occurred while the communication was in transit defeats a CIPA claim. *See, e.g.,*
16 *Mastel*, 549 F. Supp. 3d at 1136-37; *Adler v. Community.com, Inc.*, No. 2:21-cv-
17 02416-SB-JPR, 2021 WL 4805435, at *3-4 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 2, 2021); *NovelPoster*
18 *v. Javitch Canfield Grp.*, 140 F. Supp. 3d 938, 951-54 (N.D. Cal. 2014). To the extent
19 that Plaintiffs’ claim is that Defendant “records and creates transcripts” and then
20 shares these recordings and transcripts with a third party, Am. Compl., Dkt. #19,
21 ¶ 12, the cases all conclude that such acts do not violate prohibitions on intercepting
22 communications while “in transit.” *See* Def.’s Mem., Dkt. #26, at 10-12; *Rodriguez*
23 *v. Google LLC*, No. 20-CV-04688-RS, 2022 WL 214552, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 25,
24 2022) (dismissing § 631 claim where Plaintiff’s “theory is essentially one of
25 recording and then transmission, not interception”); *cf. also Konop v. Hawaiian*
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1 *Airlines, Inc.*, 302 F.3d 868, 878 (9th Cir. 2002) (“[F]or a website . . . to be
2 ‘intercepted’ in violation of the [federal] Wiretap Act, it must be acquired during
3 transmission, not while it is in electronic storage.”); *Saleh*, 562 F. Supp. 3d at 517
4 (“The analysis for a violation of the [CIPA] is the same as that under the federal
5 Wiretap Act.” (citation and internal marks omitted)).
6

7 At most, Plaintiffs provide only conclusory allegations rather than any facts
8 about the chat feature that would “support an inference that [Defendant] captured or
9 redirected the contents of [Plaintiffs’] communications while in transit.” *Rosenow v.*
10 *Facebook, Inc.*, No. 19-cv-1297-WQH-MDD, 2020 WL 1984062, at *7 (S.D. Cal.
11 Apr. 27, 2020) (internal marks omitted). Rather than plead facts showing how a chat
12 feature intercepts communications while in transit, Plaintiffs merely provide the bald
13 conclusion that Defendant allows a third party to “secretly intercept (during
14 transmission and in real time)” chat communications. Am. Compl., Dkt. #19, ¶ 12.
15 But stating that the interception occurs “during transmission” and “in real time” is
16 insufficient to state a claim under *Iqbal* and *Twombly*, which “requires more than
17 labels and conclusions”; “a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action
18 will not do.” *See Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555; *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 (“Threadbare
19 recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory
20 statements, do not suffice.”); *see also Rodriguez*, 2022 WL 214552, at *2 (“Using
21 the word ‘intercept’ repeatedly is simply not enough without the addition of specific
22 facts that make it plausible [Defendant] is intercepting [Plaintiffs’] data in transit.”);
23 *In re Vizio, Inc., Consumer Priv. Litig.*, 238 F. Supp. 3d 1204, 1228 & n.9 (C.D. Cal.
24 2017) (“conclusory allegation that [Defendant] intercepted [Plaintiffs’] electronic
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1 communications ‘during transmission’” and “vague allegations about how
2 [Defendant’s] data collection occurs ‘in real time’” were insufficient to state a claim
3 under CIPA and Wiretap Act). Plaintiffs’ brief mention of an unnamed third party,
4 without any explanation of what exactly it is doing and how it is doing it, is the
5 epitome of conclusory pleading. *See* Def.’s Mem., Dkt. #26 at 10, 12; *see also Iqbal*,
6 556 U.S. at 679 (finding pleadings are insufficient “where the well-pleaded facts do
7 not permit the court to infer more than the mere possibility of misconduct”); *Quigley*
8 *v. Yelp, Inc.*, No. 17-CV-03771-RS, 2018 WL 7204066, at *4 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 22,
9 2018) (dismissing CIPA and federal wiretapping claims despite “vague references”
10 to surveillance because complaint did “not allege with particularity how or when any
11 defendant became aware of his communications”).
12
13

14 Moreover, a third party “that provides a software service that captures its
15 clients’ data, hosts it on [its] servers, and allows the clients to analyze their data”
16 acts as a “service provider” to and an “extension” of Defendant, not an eavesdropper
17 in violation of § 631(a). *Graham v. Noom, Inc.*, 533 F. Supp. 3d 823, 832 (N.D. Cal.
18 2021); *see also Mastel*, 549 F. Supp. 3d at 1136; *Yale v. Clicktale, Inc.*, No. 20-cv-
19 07575-LB, 2021 WL 1428400, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Apr. 15, 2021); *see also* Def.’s
20 Mem., Dkt. #26 at 16-18. This failure to state a claim alleging sufficient facts to
21 show the chat feature constitutes an interception of communications while in transit
22 warrants dismissal, both with respect to claims that Defendant directly violated
23 § 631(a) and claims that Defendant aided or abetted such a violation by a third party.
24 *See Rosenow*, 2020 WL 1984062, at *7 (allegations under the federal Wiretap Act
25 that Defendant “used an algorithm to intercept and scan Plaintiff’s incoming chat
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1 messages for content during transit before placing them in electronic storage” were
2 conclusory and therefore dismissed).

3 **IV. Plaintiffs fail to state a claim that internet web chats violate § 632.7’s**
4 **prohibition of intercepting or recording telephones conversations.**

5 Plaintiffs fail to state a claim that Defendant violated § 632.7 because § 632.7
6 only covers communications between two telephones and not, as alleged here, web
7 chats between two computers. *See* Def.’s Mem., Dkt. #26, at 12-15. The plain text
8 of the statute requires that the communication take place *between two telephones*.
9 However, Plaintiffs’ allegations all pertain to textual web communications via
10 Defendant’s website chat feature between two computers.

12 In *Flanagan v. Flanagan*, the California Supreme Court explained that
13 § 632.7 was intended to “[r]espond[] to the problem of protecting the privacy of
14 parties to calls involving cellular or cordless telephones” as opposed to “landline
15 systems.” 41 P.3d 575, 581 (Cal. 2002) (internal marks omitted). Section 632.7 was
16 added to the statutory scheme to “protect[] against intentional, nonconsensual
17 recording of *telephone* conversations regardless of the content of the conversation
18 or the type of *telephone* involved.” *Id.* at 581-82 (emphases added). And California
19 Courts of Appeal have confirmed that “determin[ing] what type of telephone was
20 used to receive the subject call” is an element of a § 632.7 claim. *Hataishi v. First*
21 *Am. Home Buyers Prot. Corp.*, 168 Cal. Rptr. 3d 262, 274 (Cal. Ct. App. 2014). No
22 court has applied § 632.7 to web-based text chatting between two computers, and to
23 do so would be a significant expansion of the violations enumerated in the statute.
24 At most, some courts have contemplated that calls between two telephones using
25 Voice Over Internet Protocol technology might qualify under § 632.7, but no court
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1 has ever contemplated that written communications over the internet like email or
2 web chats constitute communication via telephone. *See Montantes v. Inventure*
3 *Foods*, No. CV-14-1128-MWF, 2014 WL 3305578, at *4 (C.D. Cal. July 2, 2014);
4 *Kahn v. Outrigger Enters., Inc.*, No. 2:13-cv-03802-SVW-JCx, 2013 WL 12136379,
5 at *6-7 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 29, 2013).

6
7 By its text, § 632.7 only applies to communications sent from a telephone and
8 received by a telephone. Plaintiffs claim to have (maybe) used a smart phone's
9 computer function to access the web-based chat, Am. Compl., Dkt. #19, ¶ 17, but
10 that is not using a "cellar radio telephone" to communicate. Rather, Plaintiffs are
11 using a computer to communicate and the fact that the computer can also function
12 as a cellular phone when used in a different way does not mean that the
13 communication is sent from a cellular phone. *Cf. Mastel*, 549 F. Supp. 3d. at 1135-
14 36 (explaining that § 631(a)'s prohibition on tapping a "telephone" does not include
15 computer communications, including such communications by smartphones). For
16 example, if Plaintiffs had written a message on a smartphone, printed the message
17 on paper from the smartphone, and then mailed the message, that would not qualify
18 as a communication transmitted from a "cellular radio telephone" for purposes of
19 § 632.7.

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22 Even more clearly, Plaintiffs nowhere allege that Defendant or a third party
23 *received* Plaintiffs' chats on a telephone—a necessary element of a claim under
24 § 632.7(a). Plaintiffs only allege that the chats took place via "telephony," which,
25 even if true (it is not),¹ is a word that is completely absent from the text of § 632.7
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27 ¹ Plaintiffs' complaint contains no factual allegations establishing that text sent over
28 the Internet necessarily involves "telephony" communication.

1 and does not meet the elements of the statute. Section 632.7 does not extend to all
2 “telephony” communications, it applies specifically to “communication transmitted
3 between . . . telephones”—namely, the specific types of telephones listed in the
4 statute. *See Montantes*, 2014 WL 3305578, at *4 (“According to this list of included
5 types of telephones, the communication must have a cellular radio or cordless
6 telephone on one side, and a cellular radio, cordless, or landline telephone on the
7 other side.”).

9 Indeed, Plaintiffs’ reading of CIPA would transform almost every adult in
10 California into a criminal and tortfeasor. By Plaintiffs’ interpretation, every email
11 sitting in an inbox—or even this electronically-filed pleading, which was sent and
12 received over the internet—that an individual retains without the consent of all
13 parties would constitute an unlawful “recording” of a “communication”
14 “transmitted . . . by telephony.” So too with every text message sent between two
15 cell phones since, according to Plaintiffs, they are sent by “telephony” and unless
16 the recipient immediately deletes them, they remain recorded on the cellphone
17 usually without the explicit consent of the sender. *Cf. In re Google Inc. Gmail Litig.*,
18 No. 13-MD-02430-LHK, 2013 WL 5423918, at *23 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 26, 2013) (in
19 rejecting § 632 claim, holding that “the communication was not being recorded
20 because email by its very nature is more similar to internet chats” and, “[u]nlike
21 phone conversations, email services are by their very nature recorded on the
22 computer of at least the recipient”); *Campbell v. Facebook Inc.*, 77 F. Supp. 3d 836,
23 849 (N.D. Cal. 2014) (“California appeals courts have generally found that Internet-
24 based communications are not ‘confidential’ within the meaning of section 632,
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1 because such communications can easily be shared by, for instance, the recipient(s)
2 of the communications.” (citing *People v. Nakai*, 107 Cal. Rptr. 3d 402, 418 (Cal.
3 Ct. App. 2010) (concerning internet chats)). Plaintiffs’ absurd interpretation of
4 § 632.7(a) has never been accepted by any court and should be dismissed by this
5 Court. *See Ma v. Ashcroft*, 361 F.3d 553, 558 (9th Cir. 2004) (“[S]tatutory
6 interpretations which would produce absurd results are to be avoided.”).

8 **CONCLUSION**

9 For these reasons, the Court should grant Defendant’s motion to dismiss.

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11 Respectfully submitted,

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13 DATED: December 20, 2022

14 **LEHOTSKY KELLER LLP**

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